

MINUTES
Underhill Conservation Commission
December 9, 2019
Underhill Town Hall

Present: Karen McKnight, Laurie Graham, Pat Lamphere, Dan Steinbauer, Nancy McRae, Betsy Chapek, Amy Golodetz

Guests: David Demarest

Absent: Peter Hiskes, Steven Webster, Daphne Tanis

Welcome and Opening Remarks: Karen welcomed and led meeting.

Approval Minutes: 11/11/19 & 12/9/19 both approved with changes.

Time: 6:30pm - 8:15

Natural Resources Section of Town Plan:

Policy 4:

- Strategy 3, take out 'held annually.'
- Create a new strategy, #4: Review town zoning regulations to ensure they are in compliance with state regulations and endangered species list.

Policy 5:

- Revise Strategy 5: Take out 'when possible'
- Strategy 5: Involve Town personnel in the removal, control, management and remediation of invasive species on Town properties and road right-of-ways. Add and develop road and highway policy regarding encounter, removal and disposal of invasive species. Appropriate seeding cover species (DD) suggested.
 - Ethan Tapper has created a draft of highway department information on common roadside invasive species.

Policy 6:

- Strategy 1: We only have class II and class III wetlands, should we remove mention of class I at this point?
- Strategy 1: 'Aesthetic' becomes 'ecological integrity' and remove 'significant'
- Update to Strategy 1: Maintain Class I designated wetlands in their natural condition; ensure that permitted alterations in Class II and Class III wetlands do not diminish their ecological integrity; comment on applications submitted to the Vermont Wetlands Offices as necessary to ensure the above.
- Strategy 1: Clarify the end of the strategy- who would comment on applications?
- Strategy 3: Remove (needs met in #2, #4 and #5)
- In discussion around Strategy 5, David Demarest suggests that for landowners who wish to create a permitted, beneficial wetland, to not be then not be held back by the regulations after the wetland is installed. Pat Lamphere mentions impact on neighbors. Karen believes that building a pond would be a state-issued plan.
- Strategy 6: "Consider purchasing or acquiring easements"

(Recommend Removing this Policy) Policy 7: Identify locations of sand, gravel and stone in Underhill that might be extracted for Town use.

- Pat believes Soil maps will reflect where the gravel would be.
- Suggest from Karen on Strategy 2: Add 'to ensure the least amount of impact on air quality, wildlife and plant habitat and the carbon footprint.'
- David Demarest reminds that if it is going to be done, it is to be done fairly for private landowners.
- Include, seek private owner input, request for proposals.
- Recommend dropping the policy.

Policy 8: Understand and minimize air pollution throughout Town.

- Consider including open burning of trash, construction debris
- Strategy 3: define 'certain areas' - areas where smoke doesn't disperse easily?
- Strategy 4: Educate and encourage cleaner burning stove (not another heating source.)

Policy 9: Plan for and mitigate flooding damage to public infrastructure, private property, and natural areas

- Strategy 2: Has this been conducted for Browns or other rivers?
- Karen suggests: Educate landowners about construction of bridges across named brooks or streams because the bridges can impact future flooding.

Policy 10: Protect surface water resources for water quality, flood resistance and natural resource resiliency.

- Strategy 3: "Consider purchasing"
- Strategy 8: "Consider developing" or "access State database" and add purpose
- New strategy: Consider aquifers
- Policy for protecting groundwater resources
- Prove they have adequate water before applying for a well
- Drought concern with climate change
- Track successive wells

Suggestion: Create another Policy that provides more about the groundwater in the background information.

- Protect groundwater resources for water quality (contamination), drought resistance and natural resource resiliency.
 - Focus on Quantity & Overuse: planning around new development and their impact on aquifer
 - Strategies 5,6,7,8 from Policy 10, become part of a new Policy
 - Preserve and retain water in the soil
 - David Demarest suggests plant cover crops that are water-retaining, build swails
 - Strategy: Consider and encourage planting cover crops, building swails and using garden-growing techniques to retain water in the soil.

Movie Update from Betsy:

- Films \$250 to show, library suggests we come up amount then ask Friends of Deborah Rawson to cover the rest. We would be able to pay ½ of the amount and will ask for the rest from the library.
- Movie Dates: Jan 28, Feb 18, March 24 (tbd.) Two will be at the library, one will be at the library.
- Coyote presentation 25th of Feb.

Adjournment at 8:15pm.